"S'Matter, Pop?"

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By C. M. Payne

The New Plays

"The Truth Wagon" Fails to Carry Conviction.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

CREDULOUS folk who believe what they see at Daly's Theatre must regret the fun they are missing by not working in a newspaper office. They probably reproach themselves bitterly for having chosen other walks in life that are narrow and dull and commonplace. If so, we must leave them in the depths of despair.

"The Truth Wagon" hits only the high places. The programme puts all the characters "on the wagon," though by no means the water wagon, as is shown when three of them come rolling into the first act with almost more than they can carry. The only one capable of balancing his load is young John Ross, whose father has thoughtfully provided his country house with a very wide door. This accomplished young man is merely flushed with drink, but Bruce Forbes, of "The Truth," who comes down from town to ask him what he is going to do with his $350,000 legacy, is pale with it—pale and tottering. The author of the play, Hayden Talbot, is evidently too young to know that in these days a reporter goes about his work soberly. This unreliable representative of "The Truth," however, has nothing to fear, for Helen Dean, of "The Star," is with him, and she will see that his paper gets the "story."

Ross is surprised to learn from Helen that "there is no sex in a newspaper office." She, in turn, is both amazed and disgusted to learn that he doesn't know what he is going to do with his brand-new fortune. She makes it a personal matter, apparently considering it her special privilege to regulate the affairs of the universe. Her censorious attitude toward the helpless young man is exceedingly droll. But she treats him more kindly after she has told him the story of her hard life and he announces his sudden intention of buying her father's paper.

To see this gilded youth jump into an automobile without even stopping to change his evening clothes and dash off on his career as a newspaper owner is to follow "The Truth Wagon" with ever-increasing wonder. The fact that his father is a candidate for governor can't stop him from telling the truth in "The Truth." He is known as "The Little Joker," but he has promised his father to tell the truth for nine months, and he seizes the golden opportunity for the trifling sum of $50,000. It is eminently fitting, of course, that he should begin his first day's work in evening clothes. This is done every day in Park Row, especially by editors who live in Brooklyn and are going to the theatre in the evening.

Muriel Starr as Helen Dean.
Max Figman as John Ross Jr.

The new editor follows another well-known Park Row custom by keeping in his private room a woman's dress, hat and veil in which he disguises himself when he goes into the political enemy's camp on a still hunt for "evidence." But as William Dean, the old editor, reminds him, this form of journalistic enterprise entails considerable risk. In this case, indeed, the intemperate reporter, who has gone over to "The Star" in a fit of jealousy caused by Helen's tender regard for her brilliant chief, sneaks up to the balcony and takes a photograph of the "woman" that leaves his office at a scandalous hour in the morning. The hour is fixed by a clock over the door in the picture. That photograph brings tears to Helen's eyes. Moreover, it threatens to bring political disaster, for Ross is running her dear, deserving old father for governor against his own dad. If that picture appears in "The Star"—good-night!

Luckily, however, the valiant editor may count upon his trusty office boy, Sammy, who, like every newspaper office boy, is very bright and wears a natty uniform with two rows of brass buttons down the front. As soon as Sammy gets a flash at the photograph, carelessly left behind by the love-crazed reporter, he skips over to the "Star" office and steals the beautifully illustrated story off the hook. Then Francis Sullivan, the Irish political boss, who makes it part of his business to control newspapers, orders it "killed" when he is confronted with a page proof of "The Truth" containing his unenviable record. From the first Sammy has given the new editor the benefit of his advice and experience, just as well-trained office boys always do.

Yet in spite of the truthful picture of newspaper life given by the play, "The Truth Wagon" doesn't carry conviction. This peculiar result may be due to the youth of the author whose enthusiasm is, perhaps, greater than his skill. The acting, in fact, is much better than the play. Max Figman has a very gay time of it as Ross, and succeeds in sending his easy good nature across the footlights. Edwin Arden shows that the old editor has no illusions left, and Georgie Mack sets an example as Sammy that no office boy could follow without losing his job. But this unusually able youngster is amusing. Miss Lucille Watson appears in gray hair and a role that gives her sharp cleverness little opportunity. As Helen, modestly described by her father as "the best reporter in New York," Miss Muriel Starr is appallingly efficient. Frank Sheridan acts cautiously as Sullivan, evidently realizing that a political boss can't be too careful in a newspaper office.

'The Lady of Dreams'

EXCEPT for the beautiful stage settings there is little to admire in "The Lady of Dreams," Louis N. Parker's translation of Rostand's "La Princesse Lointaine," at the Hudson Theatre. As a play it has scarcely more life than the dying Prince who, with his faithful knight Bertram, sets sail to discover the far-famed Princess, while as poetry it certainly has nothing to gain from either Mr. Parker or Mme. Simone.

It may be said with equal certainty that Mme. Simone has nothing to gain from "The Lady of Dreams," for it offers her a role to which she is unsuited physically and temperamentally. In a word, there is not the slightest suggestion of poetry in her performance. If only to keep peace in the company, it should be said that the maid of honor, as played by Miss Margaret Wycherly, quite outshines the Princess. Julian L'Estrange is excellent in the role of Bertram, but A. E. Anson, as the Prince, is very, very sad.

Mme. Simone as Melissinda.

As They Looked a Quarter Century Ago

Old-Time Photographs of Stage Celebrities

Minna K. Gale—Maud Hobson.

MAUD HOBSON

THE photograph of Miss Gale was taken twenty-one years ago, and shows her as Beatrice of Padua in "Guido Ferranti," which was produced at the Broadway Theatre, Jan. 26, 1891, and the title role of which was the last new part assumed by Lawrence Barrett. Miss Gale was Lawrence Barrett's last leading woman, and also Edwin Booth's. The final performance Barrett ever gave was during this Broadway Theatre engagement, and was in Bulwer-Lytton's "Richelieu," the character being Adrian de Mauprat, with Booth as Richelieu and Minna Gale as Julie de Mortimer. It occurred on Wednesday evening, March 18, 1891. He collapsed during the play, the late Lawrence Hanley finishing his performance for him; and two days later Barrett was no more. Although Booth lived until June 7, 1893, his last appearance on the stage was little later than that of his friend, manager and co-star—April 4, 1891—when he was Hamlet, with Miss Gale as Ophelia. The next year, having married Archibald C. Haynes, a wealthy life insurance agent, Miss Gale "starred" for a season in "As You Like It," "Romeo and Juliet" and such classics; and then withdrew into retirement. In 1909, following the memorable shakeup in insurance circles, Mrs. Gale-Haynes returned to the footlights in "The White Sister."

Maud Hobson made her American debut in 1894, coming from Daly's Theatre, London, to Daly's in New York, as Lady Virginia Forest in "A Gaiety Girl." The accompanying photograph, however, shows Miss Hobson in a dress she wore in "In Town," another musical comedy, in which she made her second visit to America, Sept. 6, 1897. A few years later, as a leading member of Weedon Grossmith's company, she came again, playing a part suggestively named Gypsy Vandeller; but has not been seen on this side since her fourth visit, in September, 1902.

MINNA K. GALE

Interviews With Cupid

(Copyright, 1912, by The Press Publishing Co. (The New York World).)

By Barbara Blair

III.—Love's Plea.

IT proved to be a messenger boy, and after I had closed the door behind him I turned to find Cupid sitting up in the easy chair as if he had been there all the time.

"Where did you go?" I asked blandly.

"Oh, I didn't go away," and his tone was careless; "merely rendered myself invisible for a time. It is a little way I have. Now," he cried briskly, sitting up straight and looking at me sternly, "this is what you are to do for me: Each year you earth people are leading harder and more strenuous lives. You have so many interests and so little time that I am crowded out altogether. What with the higher education for women, careers for women, suffrage for women and bridge for everybody, nobody has any time for me, but debutantes and college boys; and they are half ashamed of me. People, of course, still fall in love and still marry, but you have only to look at the issues of your daily papers to see how quickly they get over both.

"Now, I want you to bring me in the limelight. I want you to bring me prominently before the public. As the papers have it, I want you to feature me largely. Clear these false impressions of me. Make the people see that I am something more than a prank-playing, mischief-loving deity. Show the women how empty their higher education, their careers, their bridge and their suffrage movement leave their lives. Show them how I can fill the gaps these interests leave. For I, Love, make radiant the soul's dark places; I warm the cold corners of the heart; I revive dead hopes and old ambitions."

He stood erect, his eyes inspired, his curls electric with golden light. Little as he was, there was that in his face, "the light that never was by land or sea," that made me see him, not as the curled darling of a pretty woman, nor the cunning toy of a lovesick boy, but a leader of men, a ruler of the world.

"Tell them they may have their higher education, their careers, their bridge and their suffrage movement, if they will let me—LOVE—lead the way along the chosen path. There are a whole lot of you people, writer-people, artist folk, who not only think you can get along without me, but who stupidly believe you can't get on WITH me. I see you all toiling up your steep hills, with your big pack of ambitions strapped on your backs, each step making you more weary and indifferent or more hard and cold, whereas if Love held you by the hand and walked by your side; if Love's voice whispered encouragement and Love's faith made new old inspirations, the pack would not be so heavy nor the way so long. For I, Love, lash Ambition with the whip of eager hope and spur on jaded effort to ripe fruition. I, Love, make duty pleasure and pleasure happiness. In the clash between the sexes I, Love, will show the way. I will soften harsh anger's tongue, and of jarring discords make sweet harmony.

"I, Love, inspire Talent and hold Genius to his task. Without me the artist may not see the soul in Beauty's smile, nor the poet give in golden measures love's heart-throb.

"Yet what does the artist do when I peer into his bare old studio? 'Be off with you!' he cries before I so much as get my head inside the door. 'Run away, you lazy, good-for-nothing little beggar. I have no time for YOU. I have WORK to do!'

"And when I open the door of the wretched little room where Talent works when I beg her to come for a jaunt with me—just a run in the park and back—what does SHE do?

"'I can't possibly let you in now,' she cries, sternly. 'I really have no time for such a frivolous person. I am much too busy. I have something important to do. I have a message for the world.'

"And so I run away as they tell me to, and they, poor stupid folk, walk stolidly and 'with great application and perseverance' along narrow ruts, and never know the heights they might win with ME to lead the way. Now, will you help me show these stupid folk of talent all I could do for them? And will you tell the poor rich folk all they miss without me?"

"How can I," I smiled, "when I don't KNOW?"

"I have told you," he laughed. "you will be my secretary, and give MY message to the world."

(To Be Continued.)

MEDICAL GENIUS.

An old doctor, seeing a young one who was going along the street with half a dozen shabby-looking men and women, called him aside and asked: "Who are all those people, and where are you going with them?"

"I will tell you in confidence," was the reply, "that I've hired them to come and sit in my reception room. I expect a rich patient this morning, and I want to make an impression on him."—Judge's Library.

Schooldays

Find "Patches" and Follow the String!

(Copyright, 1912, by The Press Publishing Co. (The New York World).)

By Dwig

"ME—SMITH"

Biggest Cowboy Story Since "The Virginian"

By Caroline Lockhart

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Smith, a Western bad man, has murdered White Antelope, a "friendly" Indian, and, after the crime, stops at a ranch boarding-house kept by an Indian squaw, widow of a Scotch frontiersman. Among the guests are a scientist named McArthur, a pretty school teacher, Dora [illegible], and Ralston, a deputy sheriff. The squaw falls in love with Smith, to the disgust of her half-breed daughter, Susie, who hates him. Smith, while pretending to return the squaw's affection, [illegible] loves Dora. Ralston is also in love with Dora. He is stopping at the ranch in the hope of catching cattle thieves. Between him and Smith springs up an open hatred. This is intensified on Ralston's part when he sees Smith kiss Dora's hand. He thinks Dora cares for Smith; whereas she is merely trying to reform the "bad man."

CHAPTER XI.

The Best Horse.

THERE was a subtle change in Ralston, which Dora was quick to feel. He was deferential, as always, and as eager to please; but he no longer sought her company, and she missed the quick exchange of sympathetic glances at the table. It seemed to her, also, that the grimness in his face was accentuated of late.

She found herself crying one night, and called it homesickness, yet the small items of news contained in the latest letter from the spectacled youth had irritated her, and she had realized that she no longer regarded church fairs, choir practice and oyster suppers as "events."

She wondered how she had offended Ralston, if at all; or was it that he thought her bold, a brazen creature, because she had let him keep her hand so long upon the memorable occasion of the grasshopper hunt? She blushed in the darkness at the thought, and the tears slipped down her cheeks again as she decided that this must be so, since there could be no other explanation.

Before she finally slept, she had fully made up her mind that she would show him by added reserve and dignity of manner that she was not the forward hoyden he undoubtedly believed her. And as a result of this midnight decision, the Schoolmarm's "Good morning, Mr. Ralston," chilled that person like a draught from cold storage.

Susie noticed the absence of their former cordiality toward each other; and the obvious lack of warmth filled Smith with keen satisfaction. He had no notion of its cause; it was sufficient that it was so.

As their conversation daily became more forced, the estrangement more marked, Ralston's wretchedness increased in proportion. He brooded miserably over the scene he had witnessed, troubled, aside from his own interest in Dora, that she should be misled by a man of Smith's moral calibre. While he had delighted in her unworldly, childlike belief in people and things, in this instance he deeply regretted it.

Ralston understood perfectly the part which Smith desired to play in her eyes. He had heard through Dora the stories Smith had told her of wild adventures in which he figured to advantage, of reckless deeds which he hinted would be impossible since falling under her influence. He posed as a brand snatched from the burning, and conveyed the impression that his salvation was a duty which had fallen in her path for her to perform. That she applied herself to the task of elevating Smith with such combined patience and ardor was the grievance of which Ralston had most to complain.

In his darker moments he told himself that she must have a liking for the man far stronger than he had believed to have permitted the liberty which he had witnessed, one which, coming from Smith, seemed little short of sacrilege. His unhappiness was not lessened by the instances he recalled where women had married beneath them through this mistaken sense of duty, pity, or less commendable emotions.

Upon one thing he was determined, and that was never again to force his attentions upon her, to take advantage of her helplessness as he had when he had held her hand so tightly and, as he now believed, against her wishes. Although she did not show it, she must have thought him a bumpkin, an oaf, an underbred cur. He groaned as he ransacked his vocabulary for fitting words.

If only something would arise to reveal Smith's character to her in its true light! But this was too much to hope. In his depression it seemed to Ralston that the sun would never shine for him again, that failure was written on him like an I. D. brand, that sorrow everlasting would eat and sleep with him. In this mood, after a brief exchange of breakfast civilities, far worse than none, he walked slowly to the corral to saddle, cursing Smith for the braggart he knew he was and for the scoundrel he believed him to be.

Smith, it seemed, was riding that morning also, for when Ralston led his brown mare saddled and bridled from the stable Smith was tightening the cinch on his long-legged gray—the horse he had taken from the Englishman. The schoolmarm, in her riding clothes, ran down the trail, calling impatiently:

"Will one of you please get my horse for me? He broke loose last night and is over there in the pasture."

For reply, both Ralston and Smith swung into their saddles.

"I aims to get that horse. There's no call for you to go, feller."

Above all else, it was odious to Ralston to be addressed by Smith "feller."

"If you happen to get him first," he answered curtly. "And I'd like to suggest that my name is Ralston."

By way of answer, Smith dug the spurs cruelly into the thin-skinned blooded gray. Ralston loosened the reins on his brown mare, and it was a run from the jump.

Each realized that the inevitable clash had come, that no pretense of friendliness would longer be possible between them, that from now on they would be avowed enemies. As for Ralston, he was glad that the crisis had arrived; glad of anything which would divert him for ever so short a time from his own bitter thought; glad of the test which he could meet in the open, like a man.

The corral gate was open, and this led into a lane something like three-quarters of a mile in length, at the end of which was another gate opening into the pasture where the runaway pony had crawled through the loose wire fence.

The brown mare had responded to Ralston's signal like the loyal, honest little brute she was. The gravel flew behind them, and the rat-a-tat-tat of the horses' hoofs on the hard road was like the roll of a drum. They were running neck and neck, but Ralston had little fear of the result, unless the gray had phenomenal speed.

Ralston knew that whoever reached the gate first must open it. If he could get far enough in the lead he could afford to do so; if not, he meant to "pull" his horse and leave it to Smith. The real race would be from the gate to the pony.

The gray horse could run—his build showed that, and his stride bore out his appearance. Yet Ralston felt no uneasiness, for the mare had still several links of speed to let out—"and then some," as he phrased it. The pace was furious even to the gate; they ran neck and neck, like a team, and the face of each rider was set in lines of determination.

Ralston quickly saw that in the short stretch he would be unable to get sufficiently in the lead to open the gate in safety. So he pulled his horse a little, wondering if Smith would do the same. But he did not. Instead, he spurred viciously, and, to Ralston's amazement, he went at the gate high. Lifting the gray horse's head, he went over and on without a break!

It was a chance, but Smith had taken it! He never had tried the horse, but it was from the English ranch, where he knew they were bred and trained to jump. His mocking laugh floated back to Ralston while he tore at the fastenings of the gate and hurled it from him.

Ralston measured the gap between them and his heart sank. It looked hopeless. The only thing in his favor was that it was a long run, and the gray might not have the wind or the endurance. The little mare stood still, her nose out, her soft eyes shining. As he lifted the reins, he patted her neck and cried, breathing hard:

"Molly, old girl, if you win, it's oats and a rest all your life!"

He could have sworn the mare shared his humiliation.

The saddle-leathers creaked beneath him at the leap she gave. She lay down to her work like a hound, running low, her neck outstretched, her tail lying out on the breeze. Game, graceful, reaching out with her slim legs and tiny hoofs, she ate up the distance between herself and the gray in a way that made even Ralston gasp. And still she gained—and gained.

Her muscles seemed like steel springs, and the unfaltering courage in her brave heart made Ralston choke with pride and tenderness and gratitude.

Smith knew, too, that she was gaining, though he would not turn his head to look. When her nose was at his horse's rump he had it in his heart to turn and shoot her as she ran. She crept up and up, and both Smith and Ralston knew that the straining, pounding gray had done its best. The work was too rough for its feet. There was too much thoroughbred in it for lava-rock and sage-[illegible]

[illegible] rage consumed Smith as he felt the [illegible] effort of each stride and knew that it was going "dead" under him. He [illegible] his spurs with savage [illegible] the brown mare's breath [illegible] on his leg. The gray [illegible] breath came and went in [illegible]. Now they were neck and neck again. Then it was over, the little brown mare swept by, and Ralston's rope, [illegible] the air, dropped about the neck of the insignificant white "digger" that had caused it all.

"I guess you're ridin' the best horse to-day," said Smith, as he dropped from the saddle to retie his latigo.

He gave the words a peculiar emphasis and inflection which made the other man look at him.

"Molly and I have a prejudice against taking dust," Ralston answered quietly.

"It happens frequent that a feller has to get over his prejudices out in this country."

"That depends a little upon the fellow!" and he turned Molly's head toward the ranch with the pony in tow.

Smith said nothing more, but rode off across the hills with all the evil in his nature showing in his lowering countenance.

(To Be Continued.)